

Date: Tue, 24 Oct 2000 10:09:52 -0700
To: "Cech, Thomas" <cecht@hhmi.org>
From: "Patrick O. Brown" <pbrown@cmgm.stanford.edu>
Subject: An open letter supporting "public libraries"
Cc: varmus@mskcc.org

Hi Tom,

I know that Harold Varmus has already contacted you about an open letter that has been circulating informally for the past two and a half weeks, urging the scientific journals in which we publish, and for which we serve as reviewers and editors, to release the original research reports that they publish (and the complete archive of previously-published papers) for free distribution through online public libraries, within 6 months of publication.

I'm attaching the letter, along with a list of names of people who have already signed it. You will see that remarkable fraction of the signers so far have HHMI affiliations. HHMI investigators (notably Matt Scott and Sharon Long) have been among the most active scientists in rallying grassroots support for this initiative in the past week or so. Since this letter has only been circulating quietly from individual to individual, most of the signers are from the Bay Area, or scientific friends and colleagues of some of the initial supporters. But the number and geographic dispersion of supporters has been increasing rapidly.

Harold and I are now starting to try to make contact with editors and publishers of journals to encourage them to adopt the policy advocated in the open letter. (Harold will try to talk to Don Kennedy today).

I realize that as president of HHMI, it is very complicated for you to take a public position on this issue, and that you may very well disagree with the letter. However, if you do agree with the policy advocated by the letter, and if you think the action that the signers are pledging to take is reasonable and appropriate, I hope that you will consider supporting it. Any word of support from you would have an enormous impact and might be decisive in persuading journals and publishers that they should take this step.

I'd be very interested in hearing your candid thoughts and suggestions, whatever they might be.

Best regards,

Pat

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